

Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits)

Jordan: Geopolitics, International Relations, and the Future of the Middle East

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Description

The *Research Methods and Ethics* course (RME) introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data and the knowledge and skills that are essential to forming constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals, which are necessary for completing an academic project. For internship students, the course will provide the knowledge and skills that are essential to forming constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals, which are necessary for completing an internship in the cultural context of Jordan.

In particular, the seminar enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of Jordan; gathering, recording, and analyzing primary data; and writing a scholarly academic report or an internship experience. The course also pays particular attention to US higher education ethical considerations that guide primary data collection and how these could be translated within the local cultural context of Jordan and the geopolitics of the Middle East. Broadly, the seminar introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research.

The main emphasis of the seminar is on the development of empirical tools and ethics of interactive research skills involving the collection of primary data. The seminar includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences, and in particular, in international relations, psychology, and the geopolitics of the Middle East, development of a research proposal or internship proposal, and preparation of an application for review of research with human subjects. All students will participate in an overview of research design and methodological approaches to program themes. Ethical considerations related to conducting research or completing an internship will be discussed. The overall aim is to help students hone their experience-based learning processes and prepare them for the development of an Independent Study Project (ISP), which is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources, or an internship at a local organization.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Display an acute sense of positionality and operate independently, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks of trust built over the course of the semester;

- Apply the appropriate methods and ethics used in field research in the critical global issue of Migration, Identity, and Resilience, and demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Jordan;
- Analyze and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions;
- Produce an Independent Study Project proposal that is in strict observance of ethical academic standards and local values and that includes a research question, sample review of the relevant literature, outline of the research methods, and anticipated ethical challenges and ways of addressing them OR an internship proposal that includes a description of the host organization, an outline of tasks that will be performed, a proposed work timetable, and projected outcomes such as a paper or business plan.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Course Schedule

Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Experiential Learning and Positionality in Field-Based Research

This introductory module is designed to introduce students to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students learn how to relate to local communities and individuals. Most particularly, this module allows students to discover the power of experiential learning and use it as a tool to connect to local communities and individuals and develop into reflexive researchers who are attentive to their own positionality in relation to the local communities in which they engage for their research or internship.

Session 1: Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context

This session introduces students to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students learn how experiential learning can be used as a tool to explore and interact with their new cultural environment and reflect on their own positionality in relation to the host community. Students also learn research design in light of a study abroad context.

Required Readings:

Bourke, B. (2014). Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(33), 1-9.

Rossmann, G. and Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 1: "Qualitative research as learning" pp. 1-30.

Session 2: Conducting Interviews and Observations in Experiential Learning-Based Research

This session teaches students various interviewing skills and observations skills necessary to conduct scientifically sound experiential learning-based research. Students will also learn cultural and ethical considerations when conducting research in Jordan.

Required Readings:

- Glesne, C. (2005). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter 6: "But Is It Ethical? Learning to Do Right."
- Rossman, G. and Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 3 - "The Researcher as Competent and Ethical."
- Rossman, G. and Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 5 - "Planning the Research."
- Driscoll, D. L. (2011). Introduction to Primary Research: Observations, Surveys, and Interviews. *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 2*.

Session 3: Skills for Narrowing a Research Topic, Time Management, and Productivity

In this session, students learn how to develop a research topic and narrow it down to become a conductible research project. Students also learn researcher time management skills to enhance research productivity and to produce a solid research within a given time frame.

Required Readings:

- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 6th ed. Pearson Education, Inc. Chapter 6: *Qualitative and Quantitative Research Designs*.
- Bernard, H. R.. (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 4th ed. Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press. Chapter 3: *Preparing for Research*.
- Booth, C., and Williams, J. (2008). *The Craft of Research*. The University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3: *Asking Questions Finding Answers*.
- Booth, C., and Williams, J. (2008). *The Craft of Research*. The University of Chicago Press. *Chapter 12: Planning*.

Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in the Social Sciences

This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting quantitative and/or qualitative field research in the social sciences in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community.

Session 1: Data Collection: Observation and Interview Styles

This session teaches students culturally appropriate and ethically sound observation and data collection techniques and interview styles in the context of Jordan.

Required Readings:

- Yin K, R. (2011). *Qualitative Research: From Start to Finish*. Page 129-147. Guilford Press. Retrieved from: <https://teddykw2.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/qualitative-research-from-start-to-finish.pdf>
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design*. SAGE Publications. Chapter 9: *Qualitative Methods*.

Session 2: Survey and Material Culture

This session teaches students culturally appropriate and ethically sound survey designs and material culture techniques in the context of Jordan.

Required Readings:

- Yin K, R. (2011). *Qualitative Research: From Start to Finish*. Page 147-154. Guilford Press. Retrieved from: <https://teddykw2.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/qualitative-research-from-start-to-finish.pdf>
- Mason J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. SAGE Publications. Part II: *Generating Qualitative Data*, 103-120.

Session 3: Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

In This session, students learn how to read their research data, encode their research data, classify their research data, and how to evaluate and interpret the data they collected through different types of data collection.

Required Readings:

Yin K, R. (2011). *Qualitative Research: From Start to Finish*. Chapters 8 and 9. Guilford Press.

Retrieved from: <https://teddykw2.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/qualitative-research-from-start-to-finish.pdf>

Mason J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. SAGE Publications. Part III: *Analyzing Qualitative Data*.

Module 3: The Ethics of Interaction with Vulnerable Populations.

This module addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations in social science research on vulnerable populations with special focus on refugees and displaced populations. The module explores the cultural and social norms that should be considered when interacting with or interviewing refugees.

Session 1: In This session, students learn what methodological and ethical Consideration of Interaction with Vulnerable Populations. Also, students learn how to conduct structured and semi-structured interviewing with rural populations and how interacting with refugee populations and most important ethics and gender-related vulnerabilities

Required readings:

Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). 'Stop stealing our stories': The ethics of research with vulnerable groups. *Journal of human rights practice*, 2(2), 229-251.

Voutira, E., & Doná, G. (2007). Refugee research methodologies: consolidation and transformation of a field. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 163-171.

Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. B. (2003). The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration. *Disasters*, 27(3), 185-206.

Block, K., Warr, D., Gibbs, L., & Riggs, E. (2012). Addressing ethical and methodological challenges in research with refugee-background young people: reflections from the field. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 26(1), 69-87.

McKown, L. (2016) Applying Human-Centered Design to Refugee Challenges in Dadaab, Kenya. Retrieved: <https://www.idin.org/blog-news-events/blog/applying-human-centereddesign-refugee-challenges-dadaab-kenya>

Module 4: Introduction to the ISP and Internship

This module will describe the ISP and internship processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP or internship. The module will include a review and critique of past ISP and/or internship papers. The module will also walk the students through the Local Review Board (LRB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application).

Session 1: ISP/Internship Proposal format, Structure, and Related Forms

In this session, students learn about the appropriate research proposal format and structures. All proposal components will be introduced and discussed with the students in this session for their research topics or Internship placements.

Session 2: Identifying an ISP Advisor and Securing an Internship Placement

This session introduces to the students to best ways to identify and contact ISP advisors, and best ways to secure an Internship placement.

Required Reading:

Sweitzer, F. and King, M. (2014). *The Successful Internship. 4th Ed.* Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning. Chapter One.

Session 3: One-on-one Meetings with the Academic Director to Discuss Preliminary ISP or Internship Ideas

In this session, students will meet on one-on-one basis with the Academic Director to go over their ISP ideas, topics, and plans, and to discuss students' Internship ideas and placements.

Module 4: Project Proposal Development

Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this module focuses on ISP and internship proposal development and guiding students through the development of the Human Subjects Review (HSR) application for review by the Local Review Board (LRB). This critical phase in the course involves both large student group meetings and individual student meetings with the academic director and the ISP advisor or internship supervisor.

Session 1: Writing an ISP or Internship Proposal

This session discusses with students their ISP or their Internship proposals to ensure feasibility of proposals and how to secure final drafts.

Session 2: Meeting with ISP/Internship Advisor

In this session, students meet with their ISP advisors or Internship placement to finalize proposals and have a clear plan on how to proceed during the ISP or Internship period.

Session 3: Peer review of ISP or Internship Proposal Drafts

Students finalize their ISP or Internship proposals and turn them in for LRB/IRB processing.

After completing Modules 1-4, students will split into groups by ISP or internship. ISP students will take Module 5a, and internship students will take Module 5b.

Module 5a: ISP in the Context of Jordan

This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in Jordan. The module highlights the importance of applied methodology in the ISP experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student.

Session 1: Preparing for the ISP

This introductory session prepares the student for the ISP. The session covers a range of areas that include how to approach and develop rapport with research participants, how to work collaboratively with the ISP advisor, and logistics of the ISP period, including travel, materials, and timelines. Students will also review the ISP assessment rubric.

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Jordan

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Jordan, exploring such issues as how best to describe the ISP to potential research participants and others, gender norms, issues of language, and expectations for behavior while conducting research.

Required Readings:

Silverman, H., Edwards, H., Shamoo, A., & Matar, A. (2013). Enhancing research ethics capacity in the Middle East: Experience and challenges of a Fogarty-sponsored training program. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 8(5), 40-51.

Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology

This session covers strategies of time management, networking strategies, and problem-solving research challenges.

Required Reading:

Bell, J. (2014). *Doing Your Research Project: A guide for first-time researchers*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Jordan

This module prepares the student for the internship experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to internships in Jordan. The module highlights the importance of ethics in the internship experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student, the host institution, and the program.

Session 1: Preparing for the Internship

This introductory session prepares the students for their internship in country. The session covers a range of areas that include résumé preparation and cover letter, dress, student objectives for the internship, and stages of student growth in the internship. Students will review the internship rubric.

Required Reading:

AlNasser H. (2016). *New Social Enterprises in Jordan: Redefining the Meaning of Civil Society*. Chatham House, Sep. 2016.

Recommended Reading:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Chapters 2 and 3.

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Jordan

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to internships and work in Jordan, exploring such issues as how best to describe the internship experience and purpose to potential internship hosts and others, gender norms, issues of language, and workplace expectations.

Required Reading:

Creative Associates International (2014). *Employer Perspective on the Jordanian Labor Force*. <http://www.amcham.jo/Portal1/Upload/Block/Image/Creative%20Associates%20International%20Report.pdf>

Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Jordan

This session outlines the responsibilities of the student and the host organization for a productive and significant experience that can serve the objectives of both. The session also reviews best practices for a successful internship and exposes the student's positionality in relation to the organization.

Recommended Reading:

McDonald, F. (2011). *Ethical Use of Interns*. Retrieved from: <http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/ethicalstandardsadvisories/documents/psa-17.pdf>

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Assignment 1: Practice Interview

Students are asked to conduct a practice interview with one of the members of their host family. They are asked to write a small reflection (2-3 pages) about their role and attitude towards their research subjects and the skills they brought to the interview to establish an ethical and safe environment for the interviewee. Students are also encouraged to explore how their own positionality along the lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class affected the set-up and wording of their questionnaire and consequently the outcome of the interview.

Assignment 2: Topic Identification and Data Collection Design

Students are required to turn in a paper identifying a research topic of their interest, write why is it important and significant to study this topic, develop research question/hypotheses, who will the participants be, how data is going to be collected from the participants, design a sample interview, design a sample questionnaire, design and sample observation sheet, and suggest how are they going to conduct material culture.

Assignment 3: Applying Data Collection Tools

Students are asked to practice data collection tools in reality. Students are asked to practice two interviews and make observations of two different sites and turn in a paper reflecting on their experience.

Assignment 4: Research/Internship Proposal

All students must develop a research or internship proposal. The research proposal should address a theme related to the program, include research question and objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, and comply with the ethical standards learned throughout the course. The internship proposal should include the objectives to be achieved during the internship period, a justification of the work and the organization selected, skills or areas in which the student can contribute to the work of the host organization, and an outline of the work plan to be carried out.

Participation

All students are expected to prepare for classes, attend and participate in all lectures, class discussions, field activities, and carry out all assignments and other activities prepared in the context of the Research Methods and Ethics course.

Assessment:

Practice Interview	15%
Topic Identification and Data Collection Design	20%
Applying Data Collection Tools	15%
Research/Internship Proposal	40%
Participation	10%

Grading Scale:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+

74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64%	F

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates, lecturers, local constituents we engage with on site visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Academic Policies: SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.